

Senate Joint Resolution No. 18

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 30

Senate Joint Resolution No. 18—Relative to marine aquaculture.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 2, 2010.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SJR 18, Simitian. Marine aquaculture.

This measure would request the Congress to develop a comprehensive federal regulatory framework for marine aquaculture that undergoes complete environmental review and is at least as protective as that codified in California’s Sustainable Oceans Act to address environmental and economic concerns.

WHEREAS, On June 12, 2009, President Barack Obama established the federal Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force to make recommendations for a comprehensive, integrated national policy that addresses the use of ocean resources and ensures the protection, maintenance, and restoration of the health of ocean and coastal ecosystems and resources; and

WHEREAS, The protection of California’s spectacular 1,100-mile coastline is of the utmost importance to Californians and our state’s coastal and ocean-dependent industries, including commercial fishing; and

WHEREAS, California’s ocean waters contain marine protected areas and national marine sanctuaries that have special conservation, recreational, ecological, historical, cultural, archaeological, scientific, educational, and aesthetic qualities and are particularly sensitive to the impacts of marine aquaculture; and

WHEREAS, Marine aquaculture poses serious risks to California’s ocean environment, including harmful interactions between escaped fish and native ecosystems; pollution from excess nutrients, waste feed, and release of drugs and chemicals; introduction and spread of disease, pathogens, and parasites to the ocean environment and marine wildlife; heightened pressure on ocean ecosystems through wild capture of forage fish for feedstuffs; threats to maritime safety and vessel navigation; potential negative public health impacts; and stress on existing commercial fisheries and coastal dependent communities; and

WHEREAS, Without strict protections for the natural environment, marine aquaculture has the potential to degrade the quality of our ocean water and adversely impact our wildlife and resources, including native fish and marine mammals such as the California seal and sea lion; and

WHEREAS, The California Sustainable Oceans Act (Chapter 36 of the Statutes of 2006) creates the strongest state regulation of marine aquaculture by providing comprehensive state standards and requiring complete

environmental review to guard against the risks associated with marine aquaculture; and

WHEREAS, Responsible marine aquaculture that includes strict and enforceable standards to protect the environment and consumers has the ability to supply consumers with safe and high quality seafood, protect the ocean from harm, and ensure the health of native fish and wildlife; and

WHEREAS, Permitting marine aquaculture in federal waters without a comprehensive, overarching federal regulatory framework that includes science-based standards to protect the ocean could result in significant and irreversible adverse environmental consequences to coastal states; and

WHEREAS, The permitting of marine aquaculture in federal waters off California's coast is of special interest to the state because of the risks that marine aquaculture poses to the state's ocean ecosystems; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of California, jointly, That the Legislature of the State of California respectfully requests that the Congress of the United States develop a comprehensive federal regulatory framework for marine aquaculture that undergoes complete environmental review and is at least as protective as that codified in California's Sustainable Oceans Act to address the many environmental and economic concerns; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature of the State of California respectfully opposes expansion of marine aquaculture off the Pacific Coast without such a regulatory framework in place, and respectfully opposes any federal policies and legislation that would weaken California's role in marine aquaculture permitting decisions, given the threat that marine aquaculture poses to the integrity of California's coastal and ocean health, dependent tourism, and fishing economies and communities; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States, to the Secretary of Commerce, and to the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.